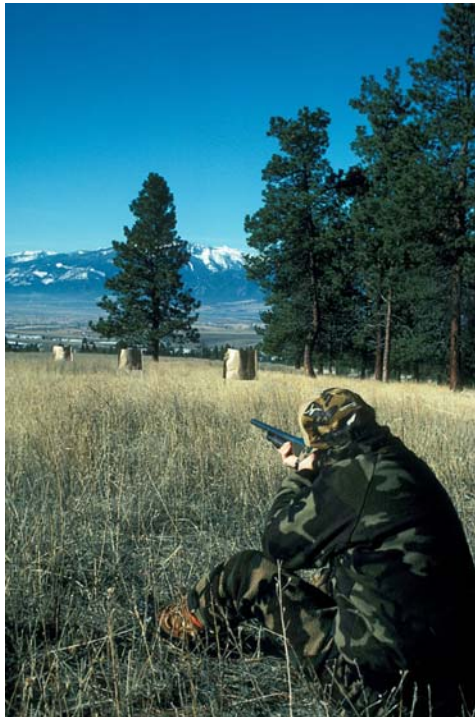


Preliminary Environmental Assessment

Glendive Shooting Range Development

Makoshika State Park Rifle Range Project, Phase II



October 2007



***Montana Fish,
Wildlife & Parks***

Preliminary Environmental Assessment MEPA, NEPA, MCA 23-1-110 CHECKLIST

PART I. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION

1. **Proposed state action:** Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) proposes to develop a shooting range at the newly acquired 357 acres recreation easement property, which is approximately 3 miles west of Glendive.
2. **Agency authority:**
FWP has the authority to develop outdoor recreational resources in the state per 23-2-101 MCA.

Furthermore, state statute 23-1-110 MCA guides public involvement and comment for the improvements at state parks and fishing access sites that significantly changes the park or fishing access site features or site patterns, which this document provides.

Lastly, Montana Administrative Rule 12.2.433 provides for public review consistent with the complexity of the environmental issues associated with a proposed action, which this narrative provides.

3. **Name of project:** Glendive Shooting Range Development
4. **Project sponsor:**
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
1420 East 6th Avenue
Helena, MT 59620
406-444-3750
Industrial Site West, POB 1630
Miles City, MT 59501
406-265-6177
5. **Timeline:**
Estimated Construction Commencement Date: Spring 2008
Estimated Completion Date: Fall 2008
Current Status of Project Design (% complete): 20%
6. **Location affected by proposed action:**
Dawson County, Montana, N1/2 Section 36, T16N, R54E.



7. Project size:

	<u>Acres</u>		<u>Acres</u>
(a) Developed:		(d) Floodplain	<u>0</u>
Residential	<u>0</u>		
Industrial	<u>0</u>	(e) Productive:	
		Irrigated cropland	<u>0</u>
(b) Open Space/	<u>0</u>	Dry cropland	<u>0</u>
Woodlands/Recreation		Forestry	<u>0</u>
(c) Wetlands/Riparian	<u>0</u>	Rangeland	<u>357</u>
Areas		Other	<u>0</u>

8. Listing of any other Local, State or Federal agency that has overlapping or additional jurisdiction.

(a) Permits: permits will be filed at least 2 weeks prior to project start.

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Permit</u>
Dawson County Sanitarian	Permit for vault latrine

(b) Funding:

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Funding Amount</u>
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks	\$200,000

(c) Other Overlapping or Additional Jurisdictional Responsibilities:

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Type of Responsibility</u>
Montana State Historical Preservation Office	Archeological & Cultural Site Protection
Montana Department of Natural Resources	Review of development plan

9. Summary of the proposed action:

Background

One of the goals identified the 2005 Makoshika State Park Management Plan under the issue of visitor services was the relocation of the public shooting range outside the park without interrupting current use. This goal acknowledges that the range is incompatible with surrounding park uses. Primarily, many park visitors feel insecure about shooting activities within the park while camping, hiking, or sightseeing. Currently, the location of the rifle range is near a Frisbee-golf course, a campground, the park's most widely used trail and trailhead, a group use shelter, and $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile from the park's visitor center. The public's safety needs to be maintained within the park and the likelihood of an accident caused by a misfire is always a possibility.

In December 2006, FWP completed an environmental assessment in order to evaluate the appropriateness of purchasing a recreational use easement on property owned by Montana Department of Natural Resource (DNRC) for the future development of a shooting range. The easement was obtained by FWP and now the Department proposes

to embark on the development of the new rifle range, which, once operational, will allow for the closure of the shooting range within Makoshika State Park.

Current Situation

The proposed construction would enhance and supersede the current shooting opportunities available at the existing range at Makoshika State Park which include: ten covered benches and backboards at 25, 50, 75, and 100 yards.

At the new location, the shooting range would include approximately 10 benches with backboards at 25, 50, 100, and 300 yards. Additionally, the site would be handicapped accessible, include a vault latrine, and parking for approximately 35 vehicles. Furthermore, a canopy for over the benches and the potential for a long distance shooting range complete with backboards at 500 and 1000 yards might be developed as funding becomes available.

Some additional benefits with a new shooting range include providing a safe and convenient location for local shooting enthusiasts to go for target practice, as well as sighting-in sporting/hunting rifles outside the state park. Furthermore, the new site would also provide local Hunters Education Instructors a public location to offer hands-on firearms training for students, thus the opportunity to teach and reinforce safe and responsible firearms handling as it is presented in the Hunters Education classroom. Finally, the proposed new range meets one of the goals identified by the Makoshika State Park Management Plan, which is to relocate the existing shooting range from within the state park, to an area outside of the park, thus enhancing visitor safety, security, and enjoyment.



View of the area to be developed for the shooting range.

Proposed Improvements

FWP intends to make the following improvements to the site:

- ◆ ten shooting benches;
- ◆ target backboards at 25-50-100-300 yards;
- ◆ a gravel access road with parking area and a sidewalk;

- ◆ safety precautions and measures taken with dirt berm work;
- ◆ fencing and signing along the property's boundary;
- ◆ an ADA accessible vault latrine;
- ◆ and bench canopies and shooting ranges of 500 and 1000 yards, as future funding becomes available.

Site Management

The proposed range will be open year-round during daylight hours. However, the shooting range may be closed annually for a brief period to allow for the neighboring landowner(s) to conduct ranch maintenance safely along the property's boundary.

Additionally, FWP plans to suspend grazing on the southern end of the property until the Department can evaluate with the public whether it can co-exist with the shooting range on a limited scale.

FWP plans to use the recommendations defined in the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Best Management Practices for Outdoor Shooting Ranges in mitigating the impacts of the range to the natural resources at the site. As part of those best practices, FWP staff will periodically collect spent castings and other micro-liter from the shooting zone.

10. Alternatives:

Alternative A: No Action

FWP would not commence the development of a shooting range on the DNRC easement property. The area would remain undeveloped, which would allow for the continuation of historic activities within its boundaries.

The shooting range within Makoshika State Park would remain open for the public to use for target practice and the park staff is likely to continue to receive negative public feedback from visitors questioning the irresponsible placement of a shooting range within the park.

Alternative B: Develop shooting range facilities at FWP's easement property west of Glendive

The proposed improvements would provide local shooting enthusiasts a safe and convenient location for shooting activities. The new facilities would offer a 25-yard pistol target, as well as, 50, 100, and 300-yard rifle targets, and a vault latrine. As funding becomes available, ranges of 500 and 1000 yards might be established with the addition of a canopy over the benches.

The construction effort would require the creation of an access road from Highway 200 to the new parking area adjacent to the shooting bench area.

The new range would allow the completion of one of the primary goals identified in the Makoshika State Park Management Plan, which is the closure of the shooting range within the park's boundaries after the establishment of a new local range.

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW CHECKLIST

3. Evaluation of the impacts of the Proposed Action including secondary and cumulative impacts on the Physical and Human Environment.

A. PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

1. <u>LAND RESOURCES</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. **Soil instability or changes in geologic substructure?			X		X	1a
b. Disruption, displacement, erosion, compaction, moisture loss, or over-covering of soil, which would reduce productivity or fertility?			X		X	1b
c. **Destruction, covering or modification of any unique geologic or physical features?		X				
d. Changes in siltation, deposition or erosion patterns that may modify the channel of a river or stream or the bed or shore of a lake?			X		X	1d
e. Exposure of people or property to earthquakes, landslides, ground failure, or other natural hazard?		X				
f. Other:						

1a/b/d. Due to the nature of the improvements, ground-disturbing activities will be required to build the access road and parking lot, and for the installation of the vault latrine. The construction and displacement of soil will cause some temporary soil instability, but Best Management Practices (erosion control and compaction techniques) will be implemented to ensure limited new runoff and erosion patterns from becoming established. Soil disturbed by the construction at both sites will be compacted and reseeded with native grasses after the construction of the previously mentioned elements are completed.

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** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

*** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

**** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

2. <u>AIR</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. **Emission of air pollutants or deterioration of ambient air quality? (Also see 13 (c).)			X			2a
b. Creation of objectionable odors?		X				
c. Alteration of air movement, moisture, or temperature patterns or any change in climate, either locally or regionally?		X				
d. Adverse effects on vegetation, including crops, due to increased emissions of pollutants?		X				
e. ***For P-R/D-J projects, will the project result in any discharge, which will conflict with federal or state air quality regs? (Also see 2a.)		X				
f. Other:						

- 2a. Minor and temporary dust and vehicle emissions would be created by construction equipment during the creation of the access road, new parking area, and the installation of the other improvements.

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3. <u>WATER</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. *Discharge into surface water or any alteration of surface water quality including but not limited to temperature, dissolved oxygen or turbidity?		X				
b. Changes in drainage patterns or the rate and amount of surface runoff?		X				
c. Alteration of the course or magnitude of floodwater or other flows?		X				
d. Changes in the amount of surface water in any water body or creation of a new water body?		X				
e. Exposure of people or property to water related hazards such as flooding?		X				
f. Changes in the quality of groundwater?		X				
g. Changes in the quantity of groundwater?		X				
h. Increase in risk of contamination of surface or groundwater?			X			3h
i. Effects on any existing water right or reservation?		X				
j. Effects on other water users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quality?		X				
k. Effects on other users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quantity?		X				
l. ****For P-R/D-J, will the project affect a designated floodplain? (Also see 3c.)		X				
m. ***For P-R/D-J, will the project result in any discharge that will affect federal or state water quality regulations? (Also see 3a.)		X				
n. Other:						

3h. The installation of a new vault toilet will meet county sanitation requirements so that no contamination of groundwater will occur.

It is expected lead from shot and bullets will be deposited on or in the soil at the range. The main human exposure to lead associated with shooting ranges is through lead-contaminated soil. When lead is exposed to acidic soil and/or water, it breaks down by weathering into lead oxides, carbonates, and other soluble compounds. The four factors that most influence the dissolving of lead in water are summarized below with associated information about the proposed shooting range site's characteristics:

- 1) Annual Precipitation Rate. The higher the annual precipitation rate, the faster the lead weathers and the higher potential risk of lead migration off-site in a solution. The area at the proposed Glendive Shooting

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Range is arid with a low annual rainfall of 13 inches. This low precipitation level will slow the dissolving of the lead into groundwater and decreases the likelihood that the lead shot will migrate off-site.

- 2) pH of Rain and Soil. The acidity of the rainwater decreases as alkaline minerals in the soil are dissolved. The predominant soil types at the site are Benz, Glendive, and Lambert making the pH of the soil 6.6 - 9.6. Lead tends to be relatively inactive at pH ranges between 6.5 and 8.5.
- 3) Contact Time. The contact time between acidic surface water and lead is a factor in the amount of lead that is dissolved. There is no surface water at the site to accelerate the dissolving of lead.
- 4) Soil Cover. Organic material will absorb lead and remove it from a water solution. The thicker the organic leaf cover on the soil, the lower the lead content in solution in water leaving the shot area. The vegetation at the site is limited to sagebrush, native grasses, and low-growing succulents.

4. <u>VEGETATION</u> Will the proposed action result in?	IMPACT *					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Changes in the diversity, productivity or abundance of plant species (including trees, shrubs, grass, crops, and aquatic plants)?			X			4a
b. Alteration of a plant community?		X				4b
c. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				4c
d. Reduction in acreage or productivity of any agricultural land?		X				
e. Establishment or spread of noxious weeds?			X		X	4e
f. ****For P-R/D-J, will the project affect wetlands, or prime and unique farmland?		X				
g. Other:						

- 4 a/b. The construction of the proposed shooting range will require the removal of vegetation to accommodate the new access road, parking area, latrine, bench area, and target berms. Areas disturbed by construction will be reseeded with a native dryland seed mix. The effects of these changes will not constitute significant changes to the diversity or abundance of the plant species in the area. The proposed developments will be established as permanent facilities on the easement property and will likely influence some growth patterns of indigenous vegetation.
- 4c. A search of the Montana Natural Heritage database of species of concern found no sensitive species within the easement's boundary. Two vascular plants listed as species of concern (Bractless Mentzelia and Bittersweet) have been found just south of the easement area. However, the database's records note that the Bractless Mentzelia notation is a historical record and the Bittersweet's is limited to only one specimen. It is unlikely either exist on the proposed project area based on this historical information and on the unsuitable habitat this area has for these plants.
- 4e. Construction of the improvements and new access to otherwise undisturbed areas by the public will likely increase the possibility of noxious weeds becoming established. Reseeding disrupted soils after construction will limit the potential for additional weed infestation by providing competition from a mix of local grasses. Additional, control efforts will follow the guidelines presented in the FWP Region 7 Weed Management Plan.

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** 5. FISH/WILDLIFE Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Deterioration of critical fish or wildlife habitat?		X				
b. Changes in the diversity or abundance of game animals or bird species?			X			5b
c. Changes in the diversity or abundance of nongame species?			X			5c
d. Introduction of new species into an area?		X				
e. Creation of a barrier to the migration or movement of animals?		X				5e
f. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				
g. Increase in conditions that stress wildlife populations or limit abundance (including harassment, legal or illegal harvest or other human activity)?			X			5g
h. ****For P-R/D-J, will the project be performed in any area in which T&E species are present, and will the project affect any T&E species or their habitat? (Also see 5f.)		X				
i. ***For P-R/D-J, will the project introduce or export any species not presently or historically occurring in the receiving location? (Also see 5d.)		X				
j. Other:						

5b/c/g. The proposed shooting range will directly impact resident and transient wildlife (mule deer, a transient population of sharp-tailed grouse, and a transient antelope population) because of the additional presence of people, their automobiles, and the noise of the shooting range. With the establishment of a permanent shooting range on the property, it is likely most wildlife will move away from the immediate range area to avoid the numerous disruptions.

Grazing had been allowed on the property when it was managed by Montana Department of Natural Resources (DNRC), however FWP has decided grazing would be no longer compatible with the proposed construction of a permanent shooting range and therefore, has not renewed any grazing permits for the property at this time. However, the Department may reevaluate the opportunity of limited grazing on the property in the future.

5e. FWP may install a fence along the access road to protect undisturbed areas from inappropriate vehicle activities on the property and for potential limited grazing in the future. Such a fence is likely to be a minor inconvenience to transient wildlife.

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B. HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

6. <u>NOISE/ELECTRICAL EFFECTS</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Increases in existing noise levels?			X			6a
b. Exposure of people to severe or nuisance noise levels?			X		X	6b
c. Creation of electrostatic or electromagnetic effects that could be detrimental to human health or property?		X				
d. Interference with radio or television reception and operation?		X				
e. Other:						

6a/b. There would be a temporary increase in noise levels at the proposed shooting range due to the addition of the construction equipment and contracting staff working at the project site. After the conclusion of the construction period, noise levels at the shooting range are expected to remain above current levels because of the sounds generated from pistols and rifles used at the range. Existing man-made sounds currently heard at the property include the vehicle traffic from the adjacent highway and from the noises generated from the nearby gravel plant.

The nearest residence is 2 miles away and depending upon the direction of the wind, is likely not to be disturbed by the expected construction noise and the range's noise levels during operating hours.

Users of the range will be expected to use proper safety protection, which includes earplugs, during target practice at the proposed shooting range.

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7. <u>LAND USE</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Alteration of or interference with the productivity or profitability of the existing land use of an area?		X				
b. Conflicted with a designated natural area or area of unusual scientific or educational importance?			X			7b
c. Conflict with any existing land use whose presence would constrain or potentially prohibit the proposed action?		X				
d. Adverse effects on or relocation of residences?		X				
e. Other:						

7b. The projected new shooting range will change the historic use of the land from open space and agriculture (grazing) to one of public recreation. Limited hunting was allowed on the property by DNRC prior to the recreation easement granted to FWP in December 2006.

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8. <u>RISK/HEALTH HAZARDS</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Risk of an explosion or release of hazardous substances (including, but not limited to oil, pesticides, chemicals, or radiation) in the event of an accident or other forms of disruption?		X			X	8a
b. Affect an existing emergency response or emergency evacuation plan, or create a need for a new plan?		X				
c. Creation of any human health hazard or potential hazard?			X		X	8c
d. ***For P-R/D-J, will any chemical toxicants be used? (Also see 8a)			X		X	8d
e. Other:						

8a/d. Chemical spraying is part of FWP's Weed Management Plan to limit the infestation of noxious weeds on the property. Only a trained licensed applicator would conduct weed treatment and chemical storage. Storage and mixing of chemicals would be in strict compliance with label instructions accordance that is current standard operating procedures. Currently, there is a small infestation of knapweed on the property.

8c. As with the establishment of a shooting range, there is inherit safety risks associated with the use of firearms. However, with the safe construction of the range and signed operating procedures at the proposed site, the potential hazard is extremely small. The range will meet or exceed the standards of design, and safety established by the National Rifle Association.

9. <u>COMMUNITY IMPACT</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Alteration of the location, distribution, density, or growth rate of the human population of an area?		X				
b. Alteration of the social structure of a community?		X				
c. Alteration of the level or distribution of employment or community or personal income?		X				
d. Changes in industrial or commercial activity?		X				
e. Increased traffic hazards or effects on existing transportation facilities or patterns of movement of people and goods?		X				
f. Other:						

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10. <u>PUBLIC SERVICES/TAXES/UTILITIES</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Will the proposed action have an effect upon or result in a need for new or altered governmental services in any of the following areas: fire or police protection, schools, parks/recreational facilities, roads or other public maintenance, water supply, sewer or septic systems, solid waste disposal, health, or other governmental services? If any, specify:		X				
b. Will the proposed action have an effect upon the local or state tax base and revenues?		X				
c. Will the proposed action result in a need for new facilities or substantial alterations of any of the following utilities: electric power, natural gas, other fuel supply or distribution systems, or communications?		X				10c
d. Will the proposed action result in increased use of any energy source?		X				
e. **Define projected revenue sources						10e
f. **Define projected maintenance costs.						10f
g. Other:						

- 10c. The proposed action will not effect existing utility easements granted by DNRC and MT Department of Transportation across the property.
- 10e. \$200,000 in FWP's Parks Division Earned Revenue and Road monies have been allocated for this proposed project.
- 10f. Anticipated maintenance costs are expected to be less than \$4,700/year, which would include weed management, waste removal, and repair of existing fencing.

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** 11. <u>AESTHETICS/RECREATION</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Alteration of any scenic vista or creation of an aesthetically offensive site or effect that is open to public view?			X		X	11a
b. Alteration of the aesthetic character of a community or neighborhood?		X				
c. **Alteration of the quality or quantity of recreational/tourism opportunities and settings? (Attach Tourism Report.)			X			11c
d. ***For P-R/D-J, will any designated or proposed wild or scenic rivers, trails or wilderness areas be impacted? (Also see 11a, 11c.)		X				
e. Other:						

11a. The proposed action will have some influence on the aesthetics of the site since the proposed development elements will change a small portion of the landscape within the properties boundaries. However, the bulk of the new facilities are expected to be minimally visible from the highway, which will give travelers through the area the impression the landscape has not been changed.

11c. The development of a new venue for the shooting range will be an additional recreation site to the community of Glendive. See *Appendix D* for the Montana Department of Commerce Tourism Report.

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12. <u>CULTURAL/HISTORICAL RESOURCES</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. **Destruction or alteration of any site, structure or object of prehistoric historic, or paleontological importance?		X				
b. Physical change that would affect unique cultural values?		X				
c. Effects on existing religious or sacred uses of a site or area?		X				
d. ****For P-R/D-J, will the project affect historic or cultural resources? Attach SHPO letter of clearance. (Also see 12.a.)		X				
e. Other:						

The Montana State Historical Preservation Office (SHPO) was contacted (See *Appendix D*) to research if any culturally significant resources had been identified with the proposed easement property. SHPO acknowledge that one site had been identified, however they concluded the proposed easement would have no effect on that site.

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SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

13. <u>SUMMARY EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE</u> Will the proposed action, considered as a whole:	IMPACT *					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (A project or program may result in impacts on two or more separate resources that create a significant effect when considered together or in total.)						
b. Involve potential risks or adverse effects, which are uncertain but extremely hazardous if they were to occur?			X			13a
c. Potentially conflict with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard or formal plan?		X				
d. Establish a precedent or likelihood that future actions with significant environmental impacts will be proposed?		X				
e. Generate substantial debate or controversy about the nature of the impacts that would be created?			X			13e
f. ***For P-R/D-J, is the project expected to have organized opposition or generate substantial public controversy? (Also see 13e.)			X			13f
g. ****For P-R/D-J, list any federal or state permits required.		X				

13a. The use of firearms is inherently dangerous. FWP will make every effort through signage at the site to inform shooting range users proper range safety operating procedures.

13e/f. A substantial controversy is not expected to occur if FWP pursues the proposed action. Over the years and through the preparation of the Makoshika Management Plan, FWP has been working with local shooting clubs, city and county representatives, and the general public regarding the anticipated move of the shooting range. Feedback and comments from those participants were taken under consideration when FWP was given the opportunity to obtain the recreation easement from Montana Department of Natural Resources for the property southwest of Glendive for the new range location and during the public review process prior to the Department formally adopting the Makoshika State Park Management Plan.

* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

*** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

**** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

2. Listing of mitigation, stipulation, or other control measures enforceable by the agency or another government agency:

Final plans and specifications for the project will be developed by the state appointed engineering consultant in conjunction with FWP engineering staff. FWP engineers will design other portions of the project. All state and federal permits will be obtained by FWP. A private contractor selected through the State's competitive bid process will complete construction. Final inspection will be the responsibility of the FWP Design and Construction Bureau.

State pesticide use laws and regulations will be followed. Application records will be submitted to the Montana Department of Agriculture as required every five-years and these records will be available to state investigators upon request.

PART III. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT

Makoshika State Park is one of the jewels of the state park system because of its geological features, historical significance to native peoples, and for the variety of activities that can take place within its borders. When the Makoshika State Park Management Plan was finalized after much thought and public participation, one of the goals of the plan specifically identified the need to relocate the existing shooting range outside the park. This need stemmed from safety concerns and that the shooting range no longer was considered an appropriate activity within the park's natural environment.

With that in mind, FWP's proposal of developing a shooting range at another location in close proximity to Glendive would meet the plan's objective of relocating the park's shooting range outside the state park. Additionally, the anticipated design of the new range would replicate the existing target distances, but would provide for the opportunity of expanding the new range's capabilities to 500 and 1000-yard distances if additional funding became available. The site's expected design would also be ADA accessible and provide parking for 35 vehicles, which is a two-fold increase over the parking capacity at the range in Makoshika State Park.

With any new development, there will be impacts to the natural environment. In particular, the proposed range development would require the construction of an access road, parking lot, installation of vault latrine, and creation of targets. These activities are expected to have localized impact on vegetation and wildlife. The influences to the vegetation will not compromise the overall diversity and abundance of indigenous species within the area. Effects to wildlife are likely to be more permanent because of the movement, noise, and presence of the public using the range year round. Transient and resident wildlife will likely choose to move away from the immediate area of the shooting range.

The geologic conditions and lack of surface water at the property make it a good candidate for limiting the migration of spent lead at the range into groundwater and away from the immediate range area. This will decrease the chance of any resource contamination.

Influences to the human environment are expected to be minimal since the closest neighbor is unlikely to be disturbed by the range's noise and the convenient location should not be a burden for those driving from Glendive to access it. FWP is committed to communicating with neighboring property owners to ensure their safety when conducting ranch activities along the property's fence lines.

The benefits for the development of a new shooting range at this site, the limited significant influences to the physical and human environment, and the attainment of one of the goals of the Makoshika State Parks Management Plan makes the proposed action by the Department one that will benefit the local community, local shooting clubs, and visitors to Makoshika State Park.

PART IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

1. Public Involvement:

FWP has facilitated numerous informational meetings that involved representatives from the Trails End Rifle & Pistol Club, Lower Yellowstone Plainsmen, Dawson County Rod & Gun Club, and the general public. These meetings solicited input regarding the development and orientation of the new facilities. Comments generated were used to design the proposed shooting range presented in this document. This level of public notice and participation is appropriate for a project of this scope.

The public will be notified in the following manner to comment on this current EA, the proposed action and alternatives:

- Two public notices in each of these papers: *Helena Independent Record* and the *Glendive Ranger Review*;
- One statewide press release;
- Public notice on the Fish, Wildlife & Parks web page: <http://fwp.mt.gov>.

Copies of this environmental assessment will be distributed to the neighboring landowners and interested parties to ensure their knowledge of the proposed project.

2. Comment period:

The public comment period will extend for (30) thirty days following the publication of the second legal notice in area newspapers. Written comments will be accepted until 5:00 p.m., November 26, 2007 and can be mailed to the address below:

Glendive Shooting Range Development
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Region 7 Headquarters
Industrial Site West, POB 1630
Miles City, MT 59501

Or email comments to: rsokoloski@mt.gov

PART V. EA PREPARATION

- 1. Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required? (YES/NO)? NO**
If an EIS is not required, explain why the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this proposed action.

Based on the criteria described by MEPA Model Rule III to assess if an EIS is required, this environmental review revealed the proposed action will have limited potential for significant long-term, negative impacts to the human environment

because of the mitigating steps initiated by the Department (i.e. design and orientation of the range) and the geological conditions at the location of the proposed shooting range. Therefore, an EIS is not necessary and an EA is the appropriate level of analysis.

2. Persons responsible for preparing the EA:

John Little
Region 7 Parks Manager
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Industrial Site West, POB 1630
Miles City, MT 59501
406-265-6177

Rebecca Cooper
MEPA Coordinator
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
1420 E. 6th Ave., Helena MT 59601
406-444-4756

Ryan Sokoloski, Manager
Makoshika State Park
PO Box 1241
Glendive, MT 59330
406-377-6256

3. List of agencies consulted during preparation of the EA:

Montana Department of Environmental Quality
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks:
 Communication & Education, Hunter Education Program
 Design & Construction Bureau
 Legal Bureau
 Parks Division
 Wildlife Division
Montana State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)
Montana Department of Commerce – Tourism
Montana Natural Heritage Program – Natural Resources Information System (NRIS)

National Rifle Association
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency – Best Practice for Outdoor Shooting Ranges

APPENDICES

- A. MCA 23-1-110 Qualification Checklist
- B. Map of Shooting Range Property
- C. New Rifle Range Concept Map
- D. Tourism Report – Department of Commerce
- E. Clearance Letter – State Historic Preservation Office

APPENDIX A
23-1-110 MCA
PROJECT QUALIFICATION CHECKLIST

Date: August 16, 2007

Person Reviewing: Rebecca Cooper

Project Location: **Glendive Shooting Range Development**
Dawson County (T16N, R55E)

Description of Proposed Work:

The following checklist is intended to be a guide for determining whether a proposed development or improvement is of enough significance to fall under 23-1-110 rules. (Please check ✓ all that apply and comment as necessary.)

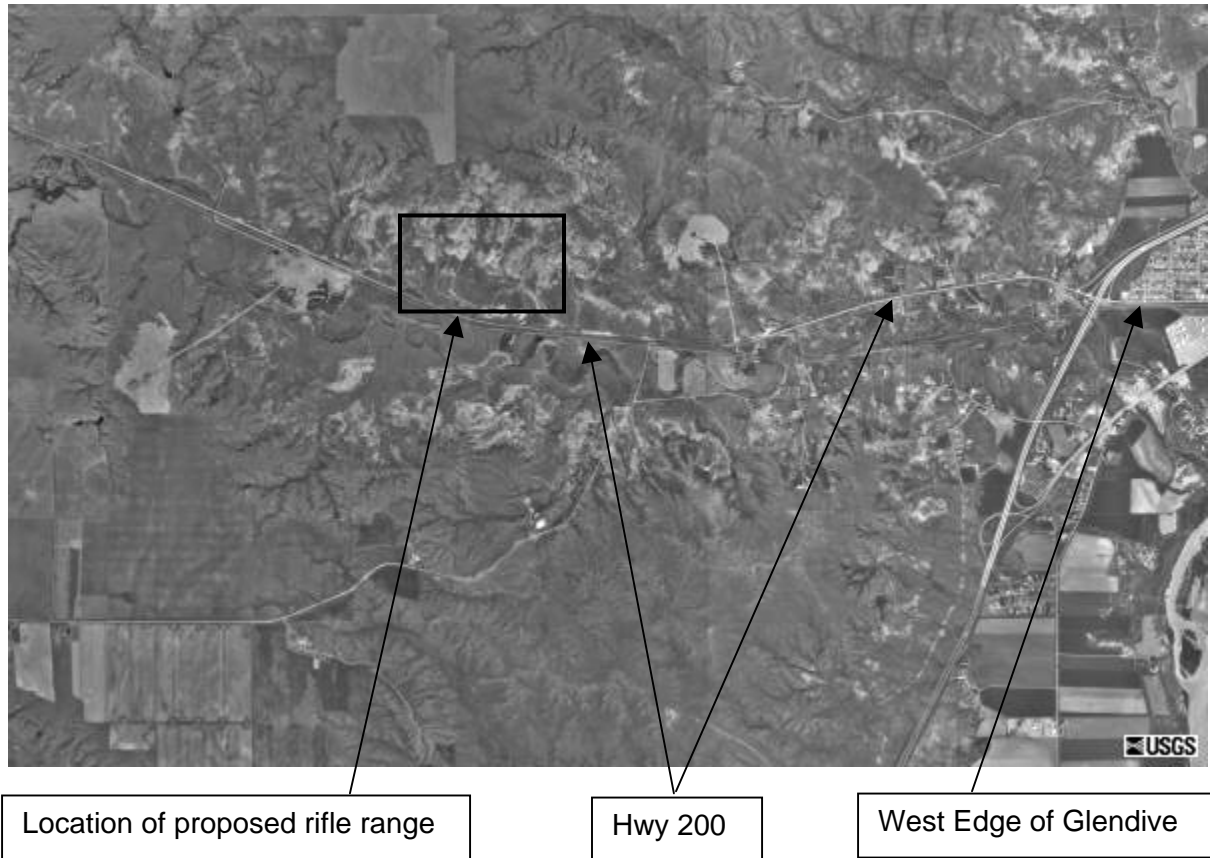
- [X] A. New roadway or trail built over undisturbed land?
Comments: *The proposed improvements at the new site would include a graded and graveled road from the turnoff from Hwy 200 to the new range.*
- [] B. New building construction (buildings <100 sf and vault latrines exempt)?
Comments: *A vault latrine is proposed at the shooting range.*
- [X] C. Any excavation of 20 c.y. or greater?
Comments:
- [X] D. New parking lots built over undisturbed land or expansion of existing lot that increases parking capacity by 25% or more?
Comments: *The proposed new rifle range would include a parking lot with a capacity of approximately 35 vehicles.*
- [] E. Any new shoreline alteration that exceeds a doublewide boat ramp or handicapped fishing station?
Comments:
- [] F. Any new construction into lakes, reservoirs, or streams?
Comments:
- [X] G. Any new construction in an area with National Registry quality cultural artifacts (as determined by State Historical Preservation Office)?
Comments: *See Appendix D for SHPO concurrence letter*

- [] H. Any new above ground utility lines?
Comments:
- [] I. Any increase or decrease in campsites of 25% or more of an existing number of campsites?
Comments:
- [X] J. Proposed project significantly changes the existing features or use pattern; including effects of a series of individual projects?
Comments: *Currently, the proposed new rifle range is used for cattle grazing and has no improvements on it, with the exception of existing utility lines. The new range site would have significant impact on the current use pattern. It is expected 4,000-5,000 sportsmen would use the site annually.*

If any of the above are checked, 23-1-110 MCA rules apply to this proposed work and should be documented on the MEPA/HB495 CHECKLIST. Refer to MEPA/HB495 Cross Reference Summary for further assistance.

APPENDIX B

Map of Shooting Range Property

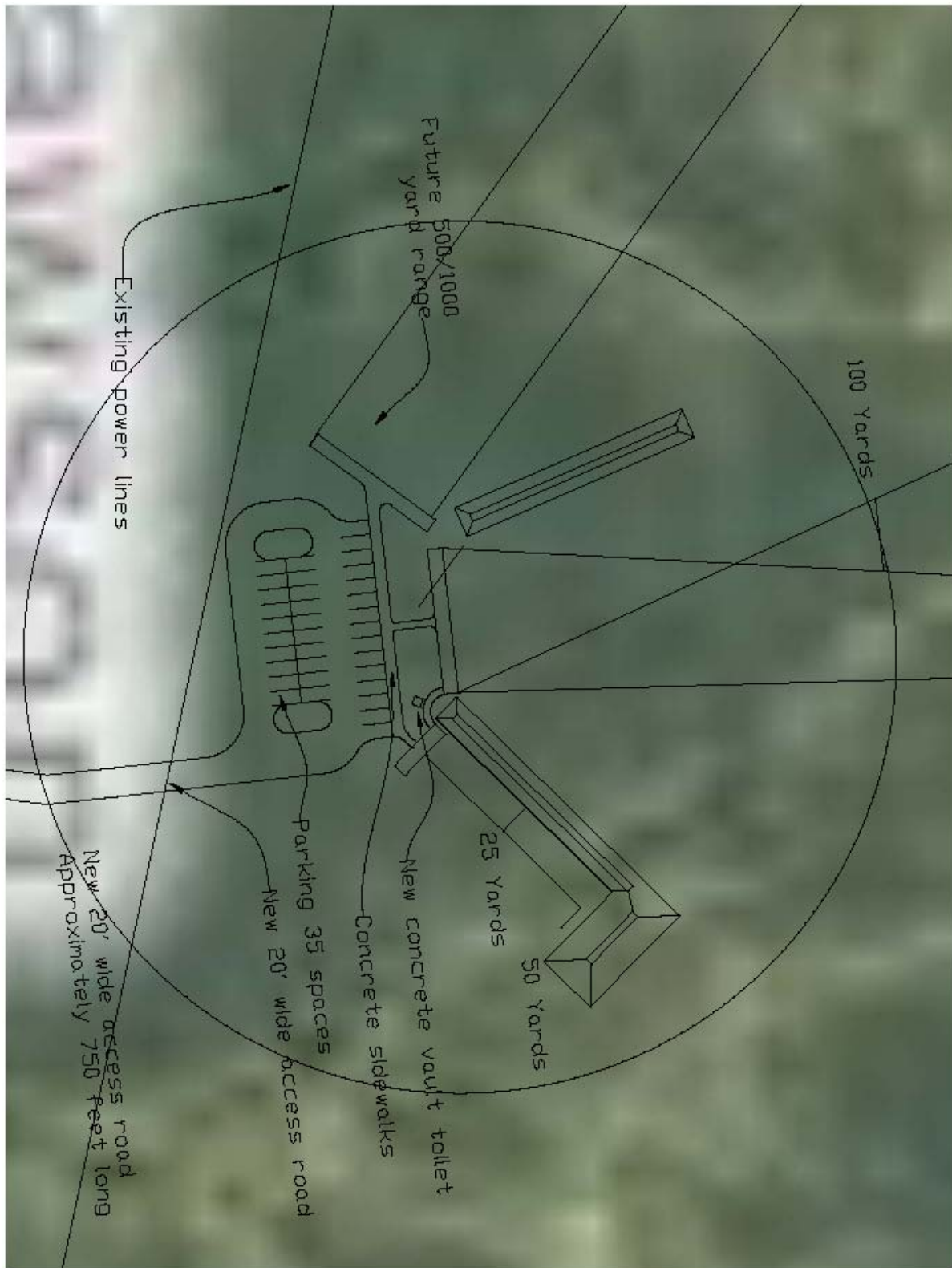


APPENDIX C

New Rifle Range Concept Map



Detail of the Concept Design



APPENDIX D

TOURISM REPORT MONTANA ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (MEPA) & MCA 23-1-110

The Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks has initiated the review process as mandated by MCA 23-1-110 and the Montana Environmental Policy Act in its consideration of the project described below. As part of the review process, input and comments are being solicited. Please complete the project name and project description portions and submit this form to:

Victor Bjornberg, Tourism Development Coordinator
Travel Montana-Department of Commerce
PO Box 200533
Helena, MT 59620-0533

Project Name: Glendive Shooting Range
Makoshika State Park Rifle Range Project, Phase II

Project Description: To develop a permanent shooting range on the property that was granted a permanent recreational use easement from Montana Department of Natural Resources (DNRC) in December 2006. The property is approximately 5 miles northwest of Glendive on Hwy 200. The anticipated site improvements will include: access road, parking area, vaulted latrine, 10 shooting benches, and target backboards at 25, 50, 100, and 300 yards. If funding is available, a canopy over the benches and targets at 500 and 1000 yards will be added.

The development of a new shooting range near Glendive will allow for the closure of the shooting range within Makoshika State Park.

1. Would this site development project have an impact on the tourism economy?

NO

YES

If YES, briefly describe:

this project will address safety concerns and management challenges of having a shooting range in a state park. While use of the shooting range appears to be mainly local, freeing up space for visitor use within the park should aid the tourism economy.

2. Does this impending improvement alter the quality or quantity of recreation/tourism opportunities and settings?

NO

YES

If YES, briefly describe:

It offers shooting opportunities outside the park while opening up user space within the park.

Signature

Victor Bjornberg, Tourism Dev. Coordinator

Date

7-23-07

APPENDIX E

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND CONSERVATION



DIVISION OF TRUST LAND MANAGEMENT

BRIAN SCHWEITZER, GOVERNOR

1625 ELEVENTH AVENUE

STATE OF MONTANA

DIRECTOR'S OFFICE (406) 444-2074
TELEFAX NUMBER (406) 444-2684

PO BOX 201801
HELENA, MONTANA 59620-1801

RECEIVED October 5, 2006

OCT 11 2006

DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION
DIV OF STATE COLLEGE & PARKS

Montana State Historic Preservation Office
Attn: Dr. Mark Bauml
P.O. Box 201202
Helena, MT 59620-1202

2006100603
RECEIVED
OCT 06 2006
BY: SHPO

RE: Cultural Resources Inventory of the N1/2 of Section 36, T16N R54E: Dawson County, Montana. Report prepared by Patrick Rennie (DNRC, Helena) for the DNRC (Helena, MT). Report dated 10-2006.

Dear Mark:

Enclosed for your review and files please find a copy of the above referenced report. That report details the results of a cultural resources inventory of a 350 acre block of state land in Dawson County. Because the DNRC is considering the permitting of the Glendive Rifle and Pistol range in the area surveyed, the inventory was conducted in order to comply with Montana State Antiquities Act mandates. During the course of inventory one previously undocumented cultural resource (24DW519) was identified and subsequently evaluated and formally recorded. It is the recommendation of the DNRC that this cultural resource site is not a National Register eligible property. As such, the DNRC is seeking concurrence of the SHPO that there should be No Effect to heritage properties on state lands with the proposed undertaking.

Thank you in advance for your time, and if you have any questions or concerns regarding the above referenced report or project please let me know.

Sincerely,

Patrick
Patrick J. Rennie
DNRC Archaeologist

CONCUR
MONTANA SHPO
DATE 10/6/06 SIGNED: *Stan Wilhoit*

encl.

CENTRALIZED SERVICES
DIVISION
(406) 444-2074

CONSERVATION & RESOURCE
DIVISION
(406) 444-6467

RESERVED WATER RIGHTS
COMPTON COMMISSION
(406) 444-6821

OIL & GAS
DIVISION
(406) 444-6635

TRUST LAND MANAGEMENT
DIVISION
(406) 444-2074